Postcolonial Pedagogy and the Impossibility of Teaching: Outside in the (Canadian Literature) Classroom

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"Every true pedagogue is in effect an anti-pedagogue, not just because every pedagogy has historically emerged as a critique of pedagogy... but because in one way or another every pedagogy stems from its confrontation with the impossibility of teaching."

— Felman 72

Canadian Literatures in the Classroom

Writing Canadian literature has been historically a very private act... Teaching it, however, is a political act.

— Atwood, Survival 14

In his account of the early years of the academic study and teaching of Canadian literature, Desmond Pacey provides a telling and amusing anecdote about colonial attitudes and Canadian literature in 1952.1 Founded by A.S.P. Woodhouse at the University of Toronto, the inaugural gathering of ACUTE (Association for Canadian University Teachers of English) was to include a session on Canadian literature, the first conference session ever to be devoted to the subject.
Woodhouse had begrudgingly agreed to include the session on the program, but convinced that it would draw few attendees, he had assigned a tiny room on the second floor of Hart House to the event. Pacey, who with Earle Birney was scheduled to speak at the session, made his way that afternoon little expecting what lay ahead:

As I reached the foot of the stairway leading to the second floor I was astonished to find that the whole stairway was jammed with people, and as I tried vainly to push my way through the mob I met Woodhouse, similarly struggling to get down.

"Good heavens, Pacey," he said, "Something is very wrong. Two centuries of English literature—and only a handful of people. And on the other hand Canadian literature (said in a tone of supreme disdain)—and just look at the mob!"

"I'm terribly sorry, sir," I said... (69)

Pacey’s memoir provides a vivid picture of the early struggles for Canadian literature in the Canadian academy, and his ingratiating apology to Woodhouse, while no doubt ironic, highlights the perceived subordinate status of Canadian literary study (and of the scholars involved in that field) at that time. Nor are the martial metaphors of struggle and combat accidental, for in those early days of Canadian literary study, a sense of embattlement was keenly felt. As late as 1973 Pacey was still asking, "We may have won a battle, but have we really won the war?" (69). I can even recall that in the late 1980s, as I was heading off to do graduate study in English, I was advised by a professor at the University of Windsor not to specialize in Canadian literature because, I was told, only inferior scholars embarked on that field.

I am pleased to say that I disregarded this bit of advice. Of course, my experience in the 1980s, and Pacey’s in the 50s and 70s, were not isolated occurrences. Similar struggles had been taking place on university campuses for decades before that decisive ACUTE meeting in 1952. In her biography of Roy Daniells, Professing English, Sandra Djwa provides a lively account of some of the early struggles Daniells experienced when trying to introduce Canadian literature into the university curriculum at the University of Manitoba. Even his attempt to have Sinclair Ross’s As For Me and My House introduced onto first-year reading lists in 1941 was met
Daniells's trials represent one moment in a long series of similar battles. While Heather Murray notes that the debates around the teaching of English literature in Canada in the late 1880s did not address the question of the teaching of what was still considered to be an immature Canadian literature (33), it wasn't long after that that Canadian texts were beginning to be introduced into university courses. Pacey dates the first university course in English Canadian literature at 1906-07, taught by J.B. Reynolds at an affiliate of the University of Guelph (the MacDonald Institute), followed the next year by Susan E. Vaughan at McGill (68; see also Fee and Monkman 1086). By the early 1920s, courses in Canadian literature were being taught by Alexander MacMechan at Dalhousie University and J.D. Logan at Acadia, with universities across the country following suit shortly after.

Nevertheless, as Lorne Pierce caustically observed in his 1927 foreword to An Outline of Canadian Literature, “Until recently, Canada enjoyed the unenviable distinction of being the only civilized country in the world where the study of its own literature was not made compulsory in the schools and colleges. Even now the effort is sporadic” (n.p.). Fee and Monkman echo this tentative note in their observation that many of the Canadian literature courses in the 1920s and 30s were offered only intermittently (1086). Pacey observed that by 1948 only two universities were offering full courses in Canadian literature: the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Guelph (67). Likewise, Malcolm Ross recalls that as a student at Queen's in the early 1950s, Canadian literature was represented as the last two weeks on an American literature course (180). A revolutionizing moment occurred in the summer of 1955, when a conference on Canadian writing organized by Roy Daniells and F.R. Scott in Kingston concluded with a session which proposed a series of “resolutions” to establish “a more prominent place to Canadian literature in school curricula, textbooks, colleges, and universities” (311). As Djwa notes, this conference “laid the foundation for the future academic study of English and Canadian literature” (311).

An established curriculum in graduate and undergraduate training in Canadian literature did not become solidly entrenched until the 1960s, and even then it was on a somewhat ad hoc basis. Such programs were dependent on the availability of professionals trained in the field of
Canadian literature as well as anthologies, journals, conferences, and critical studies devoted to Canadian authors, a phenomenon that was in turn dependent on what many, such as Robin Mathews and James Steele at Carleton University, saw to be the necessary "decolonization" of the academic study of English in Canada more generally. Despite the sense in the 1960s that the position of Canadian literature in the Canadian school and university system was secure, A.B. Hodgetts's *What Culture? What Heritage?* sparked a nation-wide controversy in 1968 when he critiqued the inadequacy of Canadian content in Canada's schools (comparable to the uproar provoked more recently by J.L. Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History*). The result was a Royal Commission, launched in 1972 by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada under the chairmanship of T.H.B. Symons. Its mandate was "to study, report, and make recommendations upon the state of teaching and research in various fields of study relating to Canada at Canadian universities" (qtd. Cameron 21-22). The publication to emerge from this venture, *To Know Ourselves* (1975), was an extensive account of Canadian content in the university curricula and a series of recommendations to right the imbalance the Commission discovered. According to the Symons report, only 8 per cent of undergraduate courses in Canadian university English departments included on their syllabi any Canadian content (35), while the numbers for graduate-level training were even more meagre (36). A respondent to the Commission stated that "until very recently, Canadian literature has been denigrated—as a swamp into which a serious scholar ventured at his (economic) peril"; at the same time, "curriculum and planning committees . . . made it evident that they regarded [Canadian literature] as unworthy of serious study" (37). Symons's conclusion was far from sanguine: "there is no developed country in the world with comparable resources that devotes as little attention [as does Canada] to the support of its own culture and of education relating to itself" (15). Hence Pacey's question in 1973: "We may have won a battle, but have we really won the war?" (69).

Every year that I teach my introductory undergraduate survey of Canadian literature, I tell my students this story to demonstrate how recent, relatively speaking, the presence of Canadian literature is in Canadian university English departments. Each year, the students express surprise. For those students who regard the course as a nuisance, one additional
requirement standing in the way of their completion of a university degree in English, this story of embattlement and struggle seems like ancient and irrelevant history. But for a few, it adds a tinge of immediacy and helps to historicize their presence in the CanLit classroom; it makes their participation in the study of Canadian literature meaningful. Indeed, what these various narratives remind one of is just how fraught the struggle for the academic study of literature in Canada was (a struggle which in the early century went hand in hand with the struggle for a Canadian literature more generally). As Stan Fogel has argued, the teaching of Canadian literature began as an “oppositional practice” (155) . . . as well as a postcolonial one.

The intersection between colonization and literary education, and the battles for the introduction of English literature into university curricula, have of course been famously outlined by Terry Eagleton and Gerald Graff. It is Gauri Viswanathan, however, who most explicitly examines the links between imperialism and the teaching of English. In *Masks of Conquest*, Viswanathan outlines the ways English literary study was used to “civilize” colonized subjects—both the British working classes and those “natives” in the imperial colonies, particularly India. Nor are the imperialist foundations of this educational project negligible for those of us teaching and studying into the twenty-first century. As John Willinsky points out, “Given the enormity of imperialism’s educational project and its relatively recent demise, it seems only reasonable to expect that this project would live on, for many of us, as an unconscious aspect of our education” (3). This was true, of course, in Canada well into the late twentieth century, not only in terms of how the canon of Canadian literature came to be constituted and disseminated, but also in view of the assumed borderlines of nation-space and the myriad delineations thought to traverse and define the nation’s people and the national zeitgeist. At the level of the professing of literature, Margaret Atwood and Robin Mathews provide informative accounts of the colonizing nature of English literature teaching in Canada in the late 1960s and 70s, and both were aiming to reach wider audiences in their plea for the decolonization of Canadian cultural education. In various places Atwood describes the colonial educational curriculum in Canadian schools in the 1940s and 50s. In *Survival*, her “CanLit” manifesto of 1972, she describes the teaching of Canadian literature as “a political act. If done badly it can make people
even more bored with their country then [sic] they already are; if done well, it may suggest to them why they have been taught to be bored with their country, and whose interests that boredom serves" (Survival 14; see also Atwood, “Nationalism”). Various fictional treatments explore similar terrain. The “Empire Bloomers” section of Cat’s Eye is perhaps Atwood’s most famous fictional account of this kind, while Wayne Johnston provides a memorable account of English literary education in a private college in Newfoundland in the early nineteen-hundreds, when the young Joey Smallwood is mocked by his headmaster for wanting to write the great Newfoundland novel that would teach the people about their culture and history.

Nevertheless, it is easy for those of us engaged in the teaching of Canadian literature to forget its once precarious footing. Like the institutionalization of English literature in the nineteenth century, and later of American literature (and, more recently, postcolonial literatures of various regions and nationalities), the institutionalized study of Canadian literature was a topic that provoked fierce resistance and contestation. At the turn of the twenty-first century, when postcolonial revisionings and pedagogical interrogations of the discipline of English literature have become more readily accepted, it is perhaps too easy to forget the radical, anti-colonial roots of the discipline of Canadian literature. This is doubly true in that much postcolonial criticism today has shifted its focus to the imperialist nature of the Canadian literary canon itself. Arif Dirlik’s well-known critique of postcolonialism is a response to this blindness on the part of contemporary postcolonial theorists. His call to historicize the project of postcolonialism represents an attempt to call attention to anti-colonialist and nationalist movements that are often dismissed by contemporary postcolonial discourse, struggles which “did not presuppose an essentialist primordialism, but rather viewed cultural identity as a project that was very much part of the struggle for liberation that it informed” (15).

Critics such as Heather Murray, Patricia Jasen, and Sarah Philips Casteel have undertaken a complementary project in their accounts of the foundations of English Studies in Canadian universities. However, Margery Fee’s “Canadian Literature and English Studies in the Canadian University,” together with the articles by Jennifer Henderson and Kathleen Marie Connor in this collection, is one of the few extended discussions of the
normalizing and colonalist underpinnings of early Canadian literary pedagogy, and her account is illuminating for any discussion of the teaching of Canadian literature today. Fee highlights the integral ambivalence at the core of English-Canadian literary study. On the one hand, Canadian literary scholars defended Canadian literature on an evaluative, "universal" basis—as good writing in and of itself. On the other, they were bound to define Canadian literature as a separate category of study, and hence had to fall back on some notion of national distinctiveness. As a result, their defence of Canadian literature was seen to be tainted by political/national interests, which in turn rendered it suspect (and subordinate) in the eyes of those committed to a transcendent universalism. This is the contradiction that informs the theoretical stance of such a notable critic and professor of Canadian literature as Northrop Frye. However, it is also a contradiction that haunts postcolonial (re)imaginings of Canadian literature—hence today one finds postcolonial debates focusing on the contest between the national and the local in Canadian literary study, or between the national and the global, where the very term Canadian is seen to be complicit with either a conflating universalism or a debilitating parochialism (see Sugars, "Can"). The postcolonial, in a sense, allows one to be both of these simultaneously, and therefore also provides a useful meta-pedagogical entry into discussions of the teaching of Canadian literature. As Donna Palmater Penne puts it in her contribution to this collection, it enables one to straddle the national and the literary, a crossover that has formed the stumbling point of discussions of Canadian literature pedagogy from its very beginnings.

Postcolonial Pedagogies and the Unthought Known

[You ask me if I can teach you, when I tell you there is no such thing as teaching, only remembering. (Socrates to Meno, in Plato, "Meno" 42)]

This volume of essays is intended as a "reappraisal" of the field of Canadian literary study from the perspective of recent developments in postcolonial and pedagogical theory. At the outset, my aim was to gather a group of scholars to discuss the influence of the last few decades of postcolonial theorizing on the teaching of Canadian literature. In 1995,
Aruna Srivastava insisted that “postcolonialists must scrutinize the place that pedagogy . . . has in our theorizing of the postcolonial and that we must also write about it, talk about it, deprivatize the almost pathological isolation in which we teach” (“Introductory” 13). This collection represents an instance of such self-scrutiny, while also aiming to assess the extent to which this project has been inaugurated. The impetus behind this book, then, was to inquire whether we had, indeed, reached a point of reappraisal of the way we teach and think about Canadian literature. Had the focus of postcolonial perspectives on relations of power, and on the politics of cultural representation, influenced or altered the ways that Canadian literature was being taught? What impact was this having both inside and outside the classroom? Or, as some critics have suggested, was there evidence of a gaping divide between academic theory and pedagogical practice? In other words, despite the radical rhetoric of postcolonial literary theorists, did the approach to teaching Canadian literature, and institutional practice as a whole, remain as traditional as ever?

The articles gathered in this collection would seem to refute the despondent prognostications implicit in the latter questions. Most undertake an interrogation of the colonialist contours of traditional pedagogical paradigms. Many suggest alternative, “de-colonizing” ways to approach the study and teaching of Canadian literature. Many, in turn, wish to effect some intersection between intellectual discourse in the academy and social change in the world beyond. Yet this is not to say that every battle has been won, to echo Pacey once again. John Willinsky’s 1998 Learning to Divide the World remains an important text for any discussion of the interrelation of postcolonial inquiry and pedagogical concerns. By highlighting the ways imperialism’s legacy is at the foundation of Western education and continues to condition our ways of conceptualizing the world, Willinsky seeks to address those issues, namely issues surrounding race and racism, that were buried when they became too uncomfortable in a purportedly postcolonial world. On the one hand, postcolonial theoretical discourse has enabled this self-reflection to occur. Nevertheless, its scope has admittedly been limited: it has not enabled us to supersede engrained habits of defining and dividing the world, nor has it brought with it an adequate decolonization or reassessment of institutional structures and practices. Srivastava notes that despite the seeming entrenchment of postcolonial approaches in the academic study of English, “the
often-unquestioned and rarely contested hierarchies and relations of power in the university or college" remain intact ("Introductory" 12–13). "Our analyses . . . of cultural texts," she states, "seem so often not to pertain to our institutional texts, discourses, and processes" (13). Gary Boire, Leslie Monkman, and Stephen Slemon, in this collection, likewise warn against a too ready complacency about the supposed post-colonializing of the Canadian academy. This impasse might suggest that we find ourselves at something of a turning point in the ways many of us, teachers and students, are reappraising the discipline.

Nevertheless, there have been some attempts in recent years to reconceptualize the academic study of literature. Perhaps the most concrete connections between the postcolonial and the pedagogical have been the various "post-colonializings" of the academy in the restructuring of university English departments across the country, such as those at the University of Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Saskatchewan. Paul Hjartarson's article in this collection, "Culture and the Global State: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy, and the Canadian Literatures," gives a timely account of similar discussions as they concerned the English program at the University of Alberta between 1999 and 2002.

Current considerations of the intersections between postcolonialism and globalization represent another way in which postcolonial theoretical discourse is shifting, although a number of critics, such as Leslie Monkman in this volume, continue to be skeptical about this so-called "reinvention" of the field. In a sense, postcolonial studies have always been "global," notably in their comparatist impetus and in their commitment to revealing the constructed nature of all claims to cultural purity. At the very least, postcolonialism has long been torn between competing pulls towards the global and the national/local. Mariam Pirbhai's and Heike Härtling's contributions to this collection explore some of the conflicted dynamics of hybridity and diasporic identity in a global context. At the same time, there has been a concomitant reappraisal of the importance of national constructs within these debates, as, for instance, Donna Palmateer Pennee provides here. The opening section of this collection includes articles that argue both standpoints, while Brenda Carr Vellino's notion of a "Human Rights Pedagogy" offers a pedagogical paradigm that insists on a meeting point between the vectors of national and global citizenship.
In addition to the theory-versus-practice (ivory tower—versus—"real" world) dichotomy that continues to inform so much postcolonial and feminist thought, an historicizing of the work we do as literary scholars might invite yet another set of questions about the implications of these interrogations (and post-colonializings) of a national pedagogy. In light of the struggle for Canadian literature over much of the twentieth century, to what extent could the various post-colonizings and deconstructions of the discipline, and of pedagogy itself, forfeit the victories that were so hard won earlier on? Might Charles Pachter's image of the plunging moose, which appears on the cover of this book, represent both a reappraisal of the field and a hint at its demise, perhaps even a wilful self-destruction on the part of its practitioners? This problematic is perhaps comparable to the dangers associated with the deconstruction of the unified subject for women and colonized subjects more generally: to what extent is Canadian literature, now that it has been secured as an independent field of study, in danger of being rendered obsolete, and is this cause for concern? And if so, how might one engage with what are undoubtedly important postcolonial and poststructuralist critiques of the field without dismissing the advances made by earlier Canadianists as irrelevant, or embracing them as safely beyond reproach? How, as I've asked elsewhere, might one undertake a post-colonializing of the postcolonial ("National"), and what would such a venture look like? It is this latter task—a reappraisal of an institutionalized Canadian literary postcolonialism—that many of the theorists in this volume are undertaking.

A scepticism towards the nationalist underpinnings of the Canadian educational establishment is not new. Even in 1968, when outlining the apparent crisis in Canadian education, A.B. Hodgetts decried the destructive influence of an over-defensive siege mentality when it came to Canadian studies:

tensions and conflict are necessary and inevitable in democratic countries. . . . civic education in Canada has been too much concerned with consensus. The conflicts within our society have been swept under the classroom desk and grayed out in the textbooks. We have been unfavorably surprised by the number of teachers and administrators who continue to believe . . . in a definitive Canadian history textbook that "emphasizes our common achievements and eliminates controversy." (11)
All of the essays in this collection emphasize the agonistic intersection of Canadian culture and pedagogy. What is new is this volume’s attempt to assess the influence of postcolonial theoretical interventions on these dynamics. While these essays range in tone from renewed optimism to outright skepticism, they share a sense of commitment to the task of inquiry, a feeling that what and how we teach matters, and a refusal to let one’s “worrying about the consequences of knowing” (Willinsky 16) become consolidated into an active will not to know. While some critics here, such as Pennee and Carr Vellino, are interested in the renewed role of a civic education or “critical citizenship,” they are alive to the contradictions and negotiations that such an enterprise necessitates. In fact, this awareness of what Diana Brydon calls the “cross-talk,” a mode that is beautifully demonstrated by Danielle Schaub’s example of teaching *In Search of April Raintree* in Israel, becomes part of the very pedagogy they propose. Hodgetts’s comments, then, are clearly applicable to the field of Canadian literary study—not just to textual content or literary history, but also to the very establishment of the discipline itself. This may be what Gerald Graff intimates in his insistence on teaching the “conflicts” (261), but Smaro Kamboureli, Roy Miki, Diana Brydon, and others represented here are equally committed to interrogating these legacies of consensus in the broader public sphere. Likewise, the essays by Beverley Haun and Linda Radford insist on the importance of introducing a postcolonial pedagogy into the public school system.

These reflections might lead one to consider a series of unsettling questions about the institutionalized study of Canadian literature. What, indeed, has been swept under the carpet in the accepted history of the Canadian academy, such as I have outlined it above? Who remained on neither the winning nor the losing side of the battle, but in some invisible space in between? Do these figures represent the “unthought known” of a nominally postcolonial cultural history? The sort of micro-historical approach proposed by Heather Murray in these pages might be the very thing to mitigate against the “learned forgetfulness” that Willinsky identifies as integral to the Western educational project (263). It is for this reason that Willinsky proposes a self-critical “educational accountability” that would examine “how our own imaginations were educated” (239) and what our imperial-based education “has underwritten and who [sic] it has denied” (16).
For me, these and other pedagogical questions were sparked after years spent discussing such concerns with fellow teachers, students, and professors of Canadian literature. Whether between classes, at university functions, on examination committees, or even on social occasions, conversation always seemed to return to questions of pedagogy. How do you approach such-and-such in the classroom? What practical methods do you use? What do you do when . . . ? Even today, I still find myself exchanging teaching ideas, course outlines, and in-class exercises with colleagues—sometimes within my department, sometimes across the country via e-mail. The enthusiasm that keeps us asking these questions is reflected more broadly in the popularity of the pedagogy and professional concerns sessions at the annual meeting of the Association for Canadian College and University Teachers of English (ACCUTE) as well as the steadily growing “Approaches to Teaching” series published by the Modern Language Association—and not just on the part of Canadian literature specialists. The energy and enthusiasm (and sheer numbers!) of those who attended the University of Ottawa’s May 2002 “Postcolonialism and Pedagogy” symposium were a further indication of just how seriously Canadian literature professionals take their role as teachers, despite what we know is a too heavily weighted accounting of research and publication on the part of university administrations, not to mention the fact that so few PhD programs in English provide pedagogical training for their students.

In formulating this topic, I also wanted to see how recent developments in pedagogical theory were influencing Canadian literature teaching. How far had we moved from the original version of “professing” literature as a reference to, as D’jwa describes it, “an individual who professed” (7). Was a critical pedagogy, such as has been outlined by Henry Giroux and others, having an impact on the teaching of Canadian literature? And could one even speak of “teaching” in the same ways any longer? Giroux discusses the “radical pedagogy” movement of the 1970s, and notes its flaws—namely that it persisted in being reactive rather than productive, failing to see schools “as sites of contestation, negotiation, and conflict” (“Schooling” 130). The essays gathered in this volume contribute to the growing body of theory in this revised wave of decolonizing pedagogical theory. Indeed, Giroux’s articulation of a more accountable “critical pedagogy,” or his sense of the role of “border pedagogy” in “developing a democratic public philosophy” (Border 28), has been taken up by any
number of scholars and professors of postcolonial theory, in Canada and elsewhere. Spivak's call for "un-learning our privilege as our loss" is perhaps the most well-known example (Post-Colonial). Many of these critics have been influenced by Paulo Freire's oppositional pedagogy described in his 1968 Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and one can see the influence of Freire's and Spivak's work in a number of the essays in this collection.

In effect, what many of these theorists of a postcolonial or decolonized pedagogy are responding to is the disciplinary aspect of traditional pedagogy and the lack of self-awareness on the part of the professor/teacher/institution. As Freire puts it (citing Marcio Moreira Alves), the central problem in such knowledge-imparting contexts is "an absence of doubt" (23), which is echoed by Giroux's notion of critical pedagogy as a mode of "uncertainty" ("Popular" 252). Helen Hoy's work is an exemplar of some of these pedagogical arguments; in her account/performance of teaching Canadian Native women's writing in How Should I Read These?, Hoy insists on a kind of "methodological humility" in relation to her students and to the texts she/they read, a stance that is echoed in Laurie Kruk's and Margaret Steffler's contributions to this volume, and which in turn foregrounds aspects of the texts and classroom learning experience that are unanticipated.

Sherene Razack outlines some of the problems with a traditional disciplinary approach to teaching in Looking White People in the Eye, and has more recently spoken about the way the teacher aims to police or keep the peace in the classroom ("Bodies"). This can occur in an obvious way, in terms of the various ways students are "silenced" in the classroom, but also in terms of the ways certain patterns of thought are structured and imposed, the ways we are schooled in "borderlines and boundaries" (Willinsky 1; Giroux, Border 28-29), and the ways "our theories and practices are involved in a particular libidinal economy and social imaginary" (Todd 2). The linear, progressive teacher-to-student notion of knowledge transfer (the student as blank slate or empty receptacle; the teacher as holder and transmitter of information) has been challenged by numerous critics in recent decades who argue that the potential for critical self-reflection is belied by the very nature of this process. In Revolutionary Pedagogies, Peter Trifonas argues against this approach to teaching, describing it as a form of "pointless pedagogy": "A pointless pedagogy is not aimless, that is, without purpose or direction. It is, however, conceptually and performatively un-
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questioned . . . offering no opening toward a recognition of what it might exclude as being unlike itself” (xii). Sharon Todd’s collection, *Learning Desire: Perspectives on Pedagogy, Culture, and the Unsaid*, likewise looks at the paradoxical nature of pedagogical desire (on the part of both teacher and student), the goal of which is to teach “the limits of knowability” (1). “Knowledge holds the promise of fulfillment,” she argues, “but only for those who . . . place themselves in a position of ‘feeling want,’ of longing for that which they feel a lack. . . . [Education] ‘creates’ desire as it offers the means for its gratification” (2). Similarly, in *Scandalous Bodies* Smaro Kamboureli articulates a notion, taken up via the American deconstructionist Barbara Johnson, of “negative pedagogy.” Based in a psychoanalytic questioning of cognitive self-presence, such a stance involves attention to what the teacher/professor/student does not know. The job of teaching brings with it a specific kind of responsibility (or what Razack refers to as a “politics of accountability”), a responsibility that “entails the recognition that what we know may already be contaminated by what we do not know, and vice versa” (25). As Kamboureli states, “negative pedagogy redefines the object of knowledge as nothing other than the process leading towards ignorance” (25).

The lack of self-consciousness exhibited on the part of a disciplinary pedagogy and its practitioners is precisely what theorists of postcolonial approaches to culture and society oppose. Connected to this, however, is the question of whether postcolonialism is always pedagogical, always containing within it some notion of its interventionist—and possibly didactic—potential. And where does one draw the line between this and the will to discipline? This is something that Maria Campbell recognizes only too well in her response to Linda Griffiths’s well-intended attempts to “learn” her: “‘When the student is ready, the teacher is there, so the teacher can learn’” (Griffiths 89). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick raises a similar concern in her interrogation of typical constructions of student-teacher transference: “Is it true that we can learn only when we are aware we are being taught? . . . It’s so often too late when we finally recognize the ‘resistance’ . . . of a student/patient as a form of pedagogy” (153-54). These are some of the questions that recent postcolonial theorists have been directing towards the so-called “mission” of postcolonial theory itself. To what extent does the postcolonial need to be post- or de-colonized? This interrogation has been especially forceful among anti-racist and anti-classist critics, such as
Aruna Srivastava, Arun Mukherjee, Roy Miki, Terry Goldie, Gary Boire, and Roxanne Rimstead, who see in current mainstream Canadian critical discourse a universalizing, obfuscating, and co-opting tendency.

The notion of a postcolonial pedagogy also entails an accountability beyond the confines of the classroom. Some critics have written about this in terms of a critical citizenship (see the essays by Pennee and Carr Vellino in this collection). Giroux, for instance, outlines his conception of border pedagogy as a means of linking "the notions of schooling and the broader category of education to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society" (Border 28), while Willinsky sees his inquiry into the imperialist legacy of education as a means to "renew connections between education and the arts as an intellectual enterprise of consequence in the world" (240). Others, following Spivak's recent work, speak in the context of increasing globalization and the necessity of a form of responsive and responsible "transnational literacy." These interrelated understandings of a critical postcolonial pedagogy extend Homi Bhabha's notion of the pedagogical versus the performative as he outlines it in "DissemiNation." Bhabha defines the pedagogical in terms of a sense of authority and teleology (the linear, rationalist narrative highlighted by many of the theorists noted above). The normalizing nature of the pedagogical, he argues, is what characterizes a traditional "nationalist pedagogy" (145), and is likewise what informs the "pedagogies of patriotism" identified by Eva Mackey in *The House of Difference* (59). The performative, by contrast, refers to the ways people are subject to the process of signification, and how the pedagogue is interpellated by the very texts/concepts he/she is intent on disseminating. Many contemporary theorists of a postcolonial pedagogy are interested in the various ways one might "perform" the pedagogical, as well as how one might "teach" the performative. In effect, this is what I mean by a post-colonializing of the postcolonial. It represents an attempt at an awareness of one's positioning vis-à-vis the national (and possibly even postcolonial) pedagogical imperative, and a further attempt to interrogate it in various ways. This might occur on a practical level in terms of one's approach to a text in the literature classroom, or as a reassessment of historical and cultural metanarratives, or as a re-evaluation of critical responsibility within national and global contexts, or even as a sense of the ways Canadian culture is interpellated by intranational and international communities more broadly. The latter is in part what Len
Findlay intends in his call to “always indigenize!” in relation to the intellectual pursuit and transmission of knowledge. This process of “indigenization”—very different from Terry Goldie’s and others’ notions of the settler-invader’s indigenization attempts as a means of becoming “Indian”—would represent one way of bringing the repressed contents of Canadian history and culture to the fore in individual performances of Canadian pedagogy.

The emphasis on what we do not know, as cultural commentators and students, can have another inflection. The critical pedagogue might want to keep in mind that there are some things that she does not know that she knows. British psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas refers to this as the “unthought known,” and there are certainly various levels of “unthought knowns,” especially in view of the transferential teaching situation, that impinge upon and enrich the learning experience for both teacher and student. Connected to this are theories of location and agency, particularly those which view the classroom as a site of production. As Richard Cavell argues, the teaching context is “not a unified space but a number of transvestic sites that are produced by and through the agendas of those who participate in it, including the instructor” (101). Socrates put this into words well before psychoanalysis tried to theorize it. In the excerpt from his dialogue about knowledge and teaching that forms the epigraph to this section, Socrates insists on teaching as “remembering.” This has overlaps with bell hooks’s conception of an “engaged pedagogy” in Teaching to Transgress (15), in the sense that what these critics emphasize are the intangibles of pedagogical transference. I mean transference here in the psychoanalytic sense, in terms of the multi-directional psychic exchange, on various unconscious levels, between two or more people, not in terms of an overt “transfer” of information from teacher to student. This is certainly related to the approach that Arun Mukherjee is advocating in her contribution to this collection when she stresses the imperative of acknowledging psychic exchange within the classroom and addressing the reality of pedagogical trauma; Gerry Turcotte invokes a similar approach in his notion of a pedagogy of the uncanny. Shoshana Felman speaks of this in terms of the “pedagogical revolution” sparked by the discovery of the unconscious: “As a process that gives access to new knowledge previously denied to consciousness, it affords what might be called a lesson in cognition (and in miscognition), an epistemological instruction” (76).
Lawrence Grossberg describes the pedagogical process in similar terms, stressing the importance of "listening for the 'stutterings,' the unexpected dialects and misspeakings, the unpredicted articulations" (20). Forfeiting one's control over the pedagogical transference might be one way of allowing unconscious contents—subjective, historical, cultural—to speak... which might in turn be one way of understanding how a pedagogy might be on its way to becoming post-colonial.

"Mooseplunge": From Risky Stories to Fragile Texts

Imperialism afforded lessons in how to divide the world... Its themes of conquering, civilizing, converting, collecting, and classifying inspired educational metaphors equally concerned with taking possession of the world—metaphors that we now have to give an account of, beginning with our own education. (Willinsky 3)

Perhaps my greatest surprise when I started to edit the submissions for this volume was the number of contributors who chose to discuss the encounter between national pedagogy and globalization—and further, to define where a postcolonial approach would fit in this discourse, if at all. This redirection has been initiated in part by Spivak's shift in focus from a decolonizing of traditional pedagogy toward a pedagogy of transnational literacy, a project begun in "Teaching for the Times" and in Outside in the Teaching Machine, and later extended in A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. However, in the context of discussions of Canadian literature pedagogy, this shift in focus represents a relatively new direction in Canadian theoretical discourse. The section of this volume entitled "National Pedagogy and Globalization" gathers six essays that approach this topic from different perspectives.

Smaro Kamboureli's discussion of the culture of celebrity in Canada takes as its impetus the notorious "Canada Reads" contest launched on CBC Radio in 2002. Her essay explores the ways professional postcolonialism and the culture of celebrity have become implicated in the service of a national pedagogy. This culture of celebrity is committed to a particular kind of "global" national ideal, figured euphorically as a "nation of plenitude" (52), an ideal which is belied by the very tentative nature of
Canada's postcolonial status. The supposed harmonization of cultural differences embodied by this ideal is epitomized in the reception of Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, the book that won the Canada Reads contest in 2002. This celebration of Ondaatje is based on an erasure of certain parts of history, which in turn supports the nation's role as pedagogue and reproducer of a sanitized, if globalized, cultural memory.

Wishing “to forge international connections beyond those associated with older notions of ‘universalism’ and newer notions of ‘globalization,’” Diana Brydon invokes “Zygmunt Bauman’s definition of globalization as not about what ‘we wish or hope to do’ but rather ‘about what is happening to us all’” (60). Given the reality of this global context, Brydon argues, we “need some way to signify the reclamation of agency, a reclamation that can no longer be claimed at the national level alone.” In this way, she undertakes a shift from a nation-based “postcolonial” vision of cultural-historical relationships, and substitutes Spivak’s call for a “transnational literacy.” As Brydon argues, “Transnational literacy expands critical literacy into a more empathetic mode of reading that Spivak calls ‘critical intimacy,’ which must then be directed to the task of understanding new modes of globalizing power and the ways in which they have easily co-opted certain forms of now-established postcolonialism . . . to their agenda” (62). It is such a mode of reading that Brydon aims to explore in her classroom teaching by emphasizing the “cross-talk,” the “contrasting assumptions, expectations, and understandings of the terms of classroom engagement, the object of study, and the function of education within the nation” (57–58). Ultimately, Brydon is asking, “How may these cross-currents be negotiated so that genuine learning can occur?” (58).

Donna Palmateer Pennee’s article, “Literary Citizenship: Culture (Un)Bounded, Culture (Ré)Distributed,” in part offers a direct response to Brydon. Concerned that the focus on the current era of globalization as a “post-cultural moment” (in the sense that cultures are no longer considered to be local or “bounded”) risks an emptying out of the significance of the local, Pennee aims to resuscitate the vector of the national for strategic means. Primarily, she is interested in the potential of the national as a forum for “literary citizenship.” In this way, she focuses on what she considers to be the realm of the “not negligible” in her teaching of Canadian cultural studies. “For the time being,” she argues, “there is no question of doing without the national; it is rather a matter of doing the national differently” (83).
Roy Miki's "Globalization, (Canadian) Culture, and Critical Pedagogy: A Primer" explores the ways the social implications of pedagogy must be moved to the forefront of our work as professors and academics. As Miki argues, "Attention to the pedagogical scene of our practices would help us account for the contingencies of our own location(s)—whether in the classroom, or in our research and writing, or in our social and cultural relations with each other" (97). This critical engagement, he hopes, will enable us to address the changes affecting all of us as we negotiate the accumulating indeterminacies prompted within an era of increased globalization. In the process, critics might be able to rearticulate those limits of the nation that have been brought to light by the global.

Paul Hjartarson opens his essay by inquiring into the very usefulness of the term postcolonialism at this historical juncture. How, he asks, "do we meaningfully separate postcolonialism from the many other developments, such as postmodernism, cultural studies, critical race and critical legal studies, and globalization, that have transformed both the discipline of English and our teaching in the past several decades?" (102). Postcolonialism, he argues, has not adequately addressed its relation to the nation-state, which renders its relation to a category titled "Canadian literatures" problematic, especially in an era of "globalized literary studies" (104). Hjartarson explores these questions by focusing on a particular case in point: the revision of the University of Alberta's English curriculum from 1999-2002. Even as postcolonial critics and theorists increasingly find themselves addressing the interrelations of postcolonialism and globalization, it is finally impossible, Hjartarson argues, "to theorize either the postcolonial or the global adequately without taking nation-states and their cultures fully into account" (113).

Leslie Monkman takes as his focus the anthologization of Alice Munro in The Norton Anthology of English Literature in order to demonstrate the conflicted relationship of national and global perspectives. In his view, "the study of Canadian literature has not been a very powerful force in our discipline over the past 25 years," and as a result, the "failure to acknowledge the actual status of Canadian writing in English in our curricular structures leaves us badly positioned to define appropriate local strategies for addressing . . . 'globalizing literary studies'" (122-23). The negotiations involved in the restructuring of the Norton, Monkman argues, have ultimately been disappointing. This process has not moved us towards a more equal representation of English literatures in their plural-
ties, but has instead moved us into the realm of a “containing” Global Lit (126), with all of the negative connotations that epithet implies. What gets forgotten in the various critiques of nationalist discourses is “an acknowledgement of existing curricular power relations” (129). In agreement with Pennee, Monkman is arguing for a form of “strategic nationalism” (and not, of course, merely Canadian nationalism), which will enable continued attention to individual locations of context and production (129), while nevertheless remaining cognizant of the disabling nature of nationalist configurations.

The second section of this volume, “Postcolonial Pedagogies,” gathers essays which in some way delineate a project for a postcolonial pedagogical approach. In “Everything I Know About Human Rights I Learned from Literature: Human Rights Literacy in the Canadian Literature Classroom,” Brenda Carr Vellino outlines her project for a human rights pedagogy in her Canadian literature classes. In her view, the absence of substantive education in the fundamental instruments, institutions, processes, and consequences of democracy in even the most obvious disciplinary contexts is a significant omission in light of the critical role the UN envisions for human rights literacy. Making the case that literature participates in international human rights culture because of its special ability to evoke ethical empathy, Carr Vellino works from the assumption that the classroom is an arena of advocacy work. Human rights pedagogy, she contends, moves analysis out of the abstract and into the realm of direct intervention in public-sphere deliberation.

In “Compr(om)ising Post/colonialisms: Postcolonial Pedagogy and the Uncanny Space of Possibility,” Gerry Turcotte offers a provocative proposal for a pedagogy of the uncanny. Beginning with a personal account of his experience organizing a conference on postcolonial theory at the University of Wollongong, and notwithstanding the numerous pitfalls in any idealistic postcolonial endeavour, Turcotte reiterates the ways unsought-for moments of uncanny disruption and slippage can be used for productive ends. This is what Turcotte identifies as a means to “gothicize” literary institutions (163). A postcolonial pedagogy, he proposes, will enact a “moment of unsettlement: this moment where our own solid ground is shown to be both substantial and insubstantial, simultaneously” (158). Turcotte thereby echoes a number of other theorists, including Brydon and Mukherjee in this collection, vis-à-vis the importance of
making use of those moments of ambivalence and tension in the literature classroom: "To negotiate these tensions," he argues, "is not only an intellectually necessary critical response, but a sound pedagogical practice, producing at best an uncanny space of possibility" (159).

Beverley Haun moves the discussion in an important direction by shifting from the university context to the sphere of public education, taking as her focus the introduction of a postcolonial pedagogy in public-school teaching. Her goal is to transform the ways teachers and students engage with issues of public memory and literary texts by refocusing teacher training and curricula through a postcolonial lens. Haun's paper is at once a theoretical discourse and a practical initiative, for she concludes her discussion by providing a detailed outline of concrete suggestions for implementing a postcolonial supplement into school curricula. In so doing, Haun hopes to find a means of enabling "the participants to transform any Western pedagogical experience into a postcolonial one" (178).

The section entitled "Decolonizing the Classroom" gathers essays that focus on the various silencings and oppressions that can take place in institutional classroom settings, especially with regard to race and class. Arun Mukherjee shifts the emphasis from the student to the teacher, focusing on racism in the classroom and the effect it has on women professors of colour. Noting the more usual emphasis on the abstract, theoretical aspects of critical pedagogy, Mukherjee examines the psychodrama and pain that occur in classroom situations where "fragile texts" are being discussed (195). By turning "the searchlight of hindsight" (200), as she beautifully phrases it, Mukherjee focuses on her personal struggles to navigate "the tangled emotions and thoughts that reading and teaching these texts have evoked" (196).

According to Terry Goldie, postcolonialism is in danger of becoming "post-ideological" (223) in the sense that everything to some degree can be said to have become postcolonial. Goldie is particularly concerned with the confusion of race with "postcolonial," and the ways this fusion effects an erasure of the class aspects of the subaltern. If many postcolonial theorists and professors construct the literature of the postcolonial subject out of a need to locate the subaltern, the Canadian devotion to multiculturalism has led to a "mis-recognized subaltern" (227). In the university English course, a place devoted to bourgeois professors and
bourgeois students, those working in postcolonial approaches to Canadian literature, Goldie argues, must trace ethnicity and race in ways that attempt to disrupt Whiteness while also disrupting our comfortable class(oom) locations.

Gary Boire continues this emphasis on “the uncanny presence of social class” (229) in the teaching of Canadian literature and in the functioning of the institution as a whole. In this respect, Boire’s essay, with Monkman’s, Goldie/Meer’s, and Mukherjee’s (and, in the afterword to this volume, Slemon’s), stands as an important document of institutional critique. In his view, “radical pedagogy cannot exist within the precincts of the university” because of the pernicious effects of “endowed privilege,” which works “to maintain a conservative agenda” in the university (230). Boire’s account functions as a sobering wake-up call, particularly for those who might be tempted to feel complacent about the emancipatory and democratizing effects of the introduction of postcolonial theory into the academy. Boire highlights the ways the supposedly enabling and ennobling rhetoric of postcolonialism has itself been co-opted by other, often economically driven, agendas, and proposes three areas for reconsideration: outreach, administration, and careerism.

If Mukherjee, Goldie, and Boire explore the vestiges of Empire in our pedagogical practices, Rob Budde highlights the ways the discourses of Eurocentrism and racism are all too present in the contemporary Canadian cultural landscape. Budde makes use of selected examples of such materials in his classroom teaching. In “Codes of Canadian Racism: Anglocentric and Assimilationist Cultural Rhetoric in the Classroom,” he demonstrates how the rhetorical devices used in media, letters, literature, government policy, and cultural theory buttress and substantiate continually evolving racist ideologies. Through a creative adaptation of these texts as pedagogical tools, he argues, teachers and students can confront and reassess personal and cultural assumptions about race.

Heike Harting continues the focus on globalization and postcolonial studies in the fourth section of this volume, “Reading/Teaching Native Literatures.” Focusing on Jeannette Armstrong’s novel *Whispering in Shadows*, Harting explores the ways the novel repositions concepts of cultural hybridity in the context of recent theories of globalization. By dramatizing cultural hybridity through the perspective of indigenous resistance movements, Armstrong contests typical understandings of hybridity as a meta-
for cultural ambivalence or global biodiversity. In both cases, questions of social justice are reduced to symbolic forms of representation. The struggle against neo-colonial globalization outlined in Armstrong’s novel through the metaphor of “cell memory” involves a shaping of the global present through interrelationships of the land, the body, and the community. By considering the cultural and eco-biological effects of global restructuring, Hårtling demonstrates how the study and teaching of Canadian literature might be situated within the field of globalization studies.

The remaining essays in this section focus very closely on practical instances of teaching Native literatures in the university classroom. Susan Gingell’s “Teaching the Talk That Walks on Paper” discusses the problems of teaching Native orature and suggests some strategies for doing so. Gingell notes the recent call to include the teaching of Aboriginal oral traditions in university curricula; however, teaching this material is not without its attendant difficulties. Providing a lively and exemplary account of some of the problems incurred in attempting to “translate” this material from page to voice, Gingell takes as a case study her experience teaching the versions of Awa’s songs reproduced in Goldie and Moses’s Anthology of Native Literature. Among the pedagogical challenges, she argues, is communicating that the aesthetics of orature are not identical to those of literature but are directly related to the demands and contexts of particular oral performances.

Laurie Kruk’s account of her experience setting up a Native literature course at Nipissing University engages with various strategies for sharing classroom power. Kruk is particularly interested in what happens when non-Native professors and/or readers “speak for” writers whose experience has traditionally been colonized and misunderstood by the dominant White majority. She speaks from her experience as a non-Native instructor developing such a course intended primarily for non-Native students. How, she asks, does one do so without re-colonizing? “Is the purpose to engage honestly and fully with [Native literature’s] differences or difficulties? Or, to seek out a reflection of our own needs, questions, concerns?” (304).

Danielle Schaub presents a fascinating case study of her experience teaching Beatrice Culleton Mosionier’s In Search of April Raintree to university students in Israel. By analyzing the strategies used in Canadian texts
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of resistance, students in other geopolitical contexts can examine how minority groups elsewhere in the world manage to express antagonism and establish agency. In Search of April Raintree becomes a useful text for Israeli students of different backgrounds—Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Druze, Beduin, or atheist—for the very reason that it does not allow easy resolutions surrounding questions of colonialism and identity. From her reading of students’ responses to this novel, Schaub shows the often wrong-headed assumptions we make about ourselves and others, often in the name of “postcolonial” enlightenment, and she demonstrates how these assumptions can be used as a positive lesson in conflict resolution. The “real-world,” pedagogical impact of Schaub’s approach is insightful.

The section entitled “Pedagogies in Practice” contains essays that focus on a particular pedagogical moment or practical approach in the teaching of Canadian literature, and offers an important complement to the more theoretically focused pieces that comprise the opening sections of this volume. A focus on practical experience and strategies was evident in the essays by Gingell, Kruk, and Schaub in the previous section, and this emphasis continues here. Misao Dean’s evocative and poignant account of her father’s canoe paddle offers an important discussion of the profundity of objects in our conception of ourselves as individuals and as Canadians. Dean uses her personal experience to discuss the ways material “things” can function as a focus of analysis in the postcolonial classroom. Because they endure over time, objects serve to naturalize and reproduce particular cultural and national traditions. The essay suggests ways that objects might be interrogated in the classroom in terms of how they contribute to myths of individual and national identity, and how in contexts such as museum displays and collections, they work by “stabilizing the shifting and changing self-representations of cultural collectivities” (348).

Margaret Steffler delineates a postcolonial approach for teaching postcolonial texts, focusing on the ways language collisions can be used constructively in the teaching of such Canadian works as Alistair MacLeod’s As Birds Bring Forth the Sun, Rohinton Mistry’s Tales from Firozsha Baag, Michael Ondaatje’s Running in the Family, Thomas King’s Green Grass, Running Water, and Rudy Wiebe’s The Blue Mountains of China. Her interest is in the ways languages exist in a state of collision in these texts rather than reaching some kind of resolved hybrid form. This state of tension, she argues, is often at the centre of the text in question, and
remains that which teachers and students alike are drawn to confront. Such moments in these works help to break down assumptions about ownership of language, and serve to position the reader as Other in relation to the text. Experiencing the inaccessibility of words on the page, she argues, can be a powerful teaching moment when students suddenly “feel” their exclusion through their position as reader.

Lisa Grekul’s contribution examines the marginalization of Ukrainian Canadian literature in Canadian literary studies and suggests new approaches for incorporating it into the pedagogical canon. Despite the increasingly heterogeneous nature of the Canadian literary canon, Grekul argues, Ukrainian Canadian writing continues to be under-represented. She lays the responsibility, in part, on Canada’s multicultural policy, which segregated isolated groups from the Canadian mainstream. Many of the texts that she considers openly criticize multicultural ideology and its repercussions; however, as long as these authors continue to be read through an ethnographic lens, they will fail to have their voices heard beyond the local Ukrainian Canadian community.

Mariam Pirbhai’s “To Canada from ‘My Many Selves’” appraises the impact of South Asian diasporic writing in English on pedagogical and theoretical approaches to Canadian literature. Her study highlights the diversity of “South Asianness” in Canada, thereby providing a more culturally and historically grounded understanding of writers who otherwise get subsumed as “representatives” of South Asian populations. Pirbhai brings us back to the global dimensions of literary study, emphasizing the transcultural over the multicultural by focusing on the global reach of South Asian diasporic populations. The consideration of a shared diasporic experience necessitates an interdisciplinary approach to literature that neither erases difference nor maintains a binary and hierarchical view of culture and identity politics. Pirbhai thus suggests that the teaching of diasporic writing in Canada requires an approach that moves more fluidly within and beyond the borders of Canadian literature rather than by repeating conceptual models—such as minority discourse, immigrant writing, ethnic writing, and postcolonial literature—which continue to maintain notions of the cultural, literary, and discursive “periphery.”

The section entitled “Historical Imperatives” gathers a number of articles that insist on an historical approach to the connections between pedagogy and colonialism in English Canada. In “Literary History as
Microhistory,” Heather Murray argues that while critical work on Canadian literature is often “historical in its orientation,” this work “has not been accompanied by a parallel dialogue on historical method” (405). To make up for this absence, Murray offers an extensive account of a new model for literary historiography in Canada, one that departs from more traditional models of national or regional histories and which combines two interrelated meanings of microhistory (microhistory as method and microhistory as scope). As she states, “Construction of a national literary history is rendered impossible by the simple fact that ‘state’ and ‘nation’ are in such a complex correspondence” (412), hence her emphasis on the local community formation. As an example of her approach, Murray focuses on a murder that took place in the debating society for Fugitive men run by Mary Ann Shadd in 1853. By emphasizing the synchronic value of particular “case studies,” Murray’s approach provides a model for a non-nationalist literary history, while also offering possibilities for a new pedagogical method.

Carole Gerson extends Murray’s interest in Canadian literary history. Her account of the material history of Pauline Johnson’s published work provides an illuminating lesson for those attempting to historicize their readings of Canadian literature, and Canadian book history, in the classroom. Focusing on the layout and design of Johnson’s key works, and the ways these material factors contributed to the exoticization of Johnson in England, Gerson demonstrates how Johnson’s personal identity and public reception subsequently became overdetermined. Speaking in particular of Johnson’s first volume of poetry, The White Wampum, Gerson notes how the book strengthened Johnson’s position as a First Nations advocate while also fostering her identification as an artificial “Iroquois Poetess” (432), consequently excluding her from other literary historical categories. Using these insights when teaching Johnson’s work can help illuminate the vicissitudes of literary reputation-making and the impetus towards a containing national pedagogy at work in what Kamboureli terms “the culture of celebrity.”

Renée Hulan’s “Margaret Atwood's Historical Lives in Context: Notes on a Postcolonial Pedagogy for Historical Fiction,” discusses the usefulness of postcolonial theory for the teaching of Canadian historical fiction. While acknowledging that “postcolonial critique can have its own exchange value if it is treated only as a standpoint and not as both a
methodology and a form of knowledge” (443), Hulan affirms the potentially enabling and transformative value of a postcolonial pedagogy. Soon after it was published, Atwood's *Alias Grace* prompted a flurry of critical discussion about historical fiction, though few responses truly engaged with the imperialist contexts of the novel's premise. By reading *Alias Grace* in conjunction with Atwood's Clarendon lecture on Sir John Franklin in *Strange Things*, Hulan brings into conjunction two interrelated narratives that deal with the historiography of convict women. By complicating the novel in this way, Hulan offers a reading of the novel that stresses “the colonial period as imperial rather than proto-national” and thereby prompts students to “think postcolonial” (456).

Jennifer Henderson provides a fascinating account of the historical interconnection between nationalism and literary pedagogy in her examination of early twentieth-century debates about the creation and education of future Canadian citizens. Focusing on the writings of Ernest Thompson Seton and Lucy Maud Montgomery, Henderson examines the ways a discourse of national pedagogy was already contemporary with these writers: “At the turn of the century, these projects of socialization often took the form of compromises between romantic educational philosophy and more utilitarian educational schemes to prepare pupils for work in rural and urban Canada” (463). The new pedagogical theory espoused by liberal education reformers of the time, including the emphasis on the pedagogical value of “personality” and “play,” is present in the “nation-tinged” (463) fiction of Seton and Montgomery. Paradoxically, this emphasis on individuality and constructive ungovernability was in turn related to the broader pedagogical project of educating the reader according to the emergent normative scheme of good citizenship. Henderson's essay thus contributes to ongoing postcolonial investigations into the relationship between literature and the making of national selves.

Kathleen Marie Connor's contribution shares Henderson's focus on the intersections of early twentieth-century writing and the formulation of a national pedagogy. Connor's account of the “dominion-itive” role of Ernest Thompson Seton's realistic animal tales in the constitution of a national Canadian literary pedagogy underscores the interconnections of cultural representation and colonialist discourse, and highlights their mutual implication in private and public discourses about citizenship and identity. Connor's focus on children's literature utilizes a form of critical
“border pedagogy” (499) and argues for a postcolonial interrogation of the ways these texts continue to be disseminated in Canada. “If a study of post-colonialism in education is to be something more than an autopsy of worlds that collided,” she concludes, “a decision needs to be made about how to extend theory into pedagogical practice” (499).

Linda Radford shifts the focus to the university teacher-education classroom. Like Haun, Radford is advocating the introduction of a postcolonial pedagogy in secondary schools (and in the training of secondary-school teachers). Arguing that teachers are usually taught to read historical fiction uncritically, Radford examines the ways preservice teachers engage with texts that depict a problematic history. As Radford notes, “Between the teachers’ own refusal to discuss a text and the teacher education program’s limitations, the ‘I am teacher’ (all knowing) and ‘you are student’ (empty vessel) model remains entrenched despite all of the well-intended talk about student-centred learning and critical thinking skills” (510). The genre of juvenile historical fiction presents particular obstacles to classroom literature teachers because it forces teachers and students to engage with “risky stories” (507). Radford takes as her case study Canadian writer Karleen Bradford’s 1992 novel *There Will Be Wolves*, and asks how teachers’ engagements with this text can be used as a site for postcolonial education. This applies to their revised approach to this difficult text as well as to the ways their initial responses might be used to reflect upon and “post-colonize” current reading and teaching practices.

Finally, Stephen Slemon offers an afterword that performs a reappraisal of the notion of a postcolonial pedagogy. Slemon is somewhat less sanguine than many of the contributors to this collection, and hence, perhaps, provides a fittingly inconclusive conclusion to a volume concerned with impossible necessity. In his view, the period of the last two decades of pedagogical optimism has not borne fruit: “We are now in the aftershock of a decade of indifferent achievement in the practice of postcolonial literary pedagogy” (519). Writing of the inherent incommensurability of postcolonialism and pedagogy, Slemon argues that the two “do not easily come together in the study and teaching of the Canadian literatures in Canadian universities” (519). Because literary pedagogy has its foundation in a form of “social engineering” (520), its pairing with an emancipatory postcolonial approach is rendered inherently problematic.
How does one teach the postcolonial? If it is this incompatibility that is at the core of this collection of papers, it may nevertheless be true that one can turn this problematic into a productive pedagogical lesson. If the pedagogical, in Canada, was from the very outset both compromised and postcolonial, it may also be true that the postcolonial is always, necessarily pedagogical. As Slemon concludes, "A postcolonial pedagogy . . . cannot do other than seek out the genuine difficulty inherent in the material it finds before itself" (523). At this particular historical, pedagogical moment, perhaps that is no small endeavour.

NOTES

1. Pacey limits his discussion to an English-Canadian context. Because debates about the teaching of a national literature have tended to consider anglophone and francophone contexts separately, this volume is likewise focused on the teaching of Canadian literature in anglophone Canada (which is not the same as saying that these critics do not sometimes teach and/or study francophone texts). Fee and Monkman’s entry on “Teaching Canadian Literature” in the Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada includes a brief history of the teaching of French-Canadian literature in Quebec.

2. Of course, coterminous with the institutionalization of Canadian literature within Canadian English departments was the advent of Commonwealth Studies. According to Stephen Slemon, Commonwealth Literary Studies came into existence in response to “the maniacal Anglocentrism that dominated English department curricula and canons in their home countries” (“Post-Colonial” 185). See also Brydon, “Introduction,” and Tiffin, “Lie Back” and “Plato’s Cave,” for articles that discuss this connection.

3. In linking Atwood and Mathews in this way I do not mean to suggest that they were always in agreement. Mathews’s stinging review of Survival appeared in the 1972/73 issue of This Magazine and Atwood was invited to respond to it (see her “Mathews and Misrepresentation” reprinted in Second Words; Mathews’s review is reprinted in his Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution). In Mathews’s view, Atwood’s account focused too exclusively on surrender and survival, and not enough on moments of overt struggle and active anti-Americanism. The subtitle of Mathews’s 1978 study, “Surrender or Revolution,” invokes what he saw to be their differing perspectives.

4. For an historical account of the beginnings of postcolonial literary discourse in Canada, see Brydon, “Introduction.” See also my anthology of early and contemporary essays of Canadian postcolonial theory, Unhomely States.
5. See Cavell for an account of the occlusive nature of this "inside/outside" dichotomy in pedagogical and postcolonial theory (105).
6. As of June 2003, the MLA series is up to 82 volumes.
7. I am indebted to Felman's chapter on education in Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight for calling my attention to this evocative passage from Plato's Meno (69).

WORKS CITED


Introduction


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